

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### HINCHEY COMMENTS ON PCB REMOVAL PLAN

KINGSTON – U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) on Tuesday night attended a public meeting held by the Environmental Protection Agency at Marist College. Hinchey submitted the following comments:

"I strongly support EPA's decision to dredge contaminated sediments from the largest hot spots in the Hudson River.

"Over the past thirty years, I have worked with many people in New York and Washington, DC to make the Hudson River cleaner. As a result of the Rockefeller Pure Waters program, the federal Clean Water Act, and many other actions, the Hudson is healthier today than at any time in the last century. Unfortunately, over a period of thirty years, General Electric dumped over one million pounds of PCBs directly into the river from its facilities in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward, NY. Because of this PCB contamination, our beautiful river has the unfortunate distinction of being the country's largest toxic waste site.

"Now, finally, after a decade of studies and delays this last serious insult to the integrity of the river can be removed. I applaud EPA's comprehensive plan to remove PCBs from the Hudson River; it is long overdue and I believe we should move forward with it.

"It is not acceptable to leave the PCBs in the river. The river will not clean itself. A decade of independently examined scientific studies has determined that PCBs will continue to pose an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment unless we remove them.

"EPA's science has shown that the PCBs are not sitting harmlessly at the bottom of the river in hot spots. Toxic contamination continues moving downstream and entering the food chain.

"These scientific studies have determined that the PCBs are not going away naturally. Without dredging, contamination in fish will remain at unhealthy levels for the foreseeable future. People will continue to eat these fish and those who do face substantially increased risks of cancer and other serious health problems, especially children. The types of PCBs that bioaccumulate in fish and other animals, and bind to sediments as they have in the Hudson, happen to be the most carcinogenic.

"EPA's proposed cleanup would dramatically improve the health of the river. By removing 100,000 pounds of PCBs from the areas where they are most concentrated, the risk to human health and fish would be reduced fivefold immediately following the cleanup. Within two years after the completion of the cleanup, the State would be able to relax fish consumption advisories.

"GE has demonstrated, and stated, that it will stop at nothing to ensure that the proposed cleanup never happens. The company has unleashed a massive public relations campaign and is spending millions of dollars on ads that deliberately distort the facts in an effort to deceive Hudson Valley residents. GE tried repeatedly to delay the release of the EPA study and is now trying to have the Superfund law, which protects Americans from toxic waste sites, declared unconstitutional.

"GE objects to Superfund's provision that requires the polluter, rather than the taxpayers, to pay for the cleanup. I believe that GE should be held responsible for their pollution, and pay to clean it up, just like any other company is required to do.

"In my lifetime, tremendous progress has been made in cleaning up the Hudson River. Both the state and the federal government have made substantial investments in bringing the Hudson back to life, GE should now take responsibility for its share. EPA's plan to dredge PCBs from the Hudson should go forward so that future generations are not left with a legacy of pollution and the residents of the Hudson Valley can fully enjoy the benefits of a clean Hudson."